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POEMATIA.

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“BLOOD DROPS,”

BIRTHDAY LINES,

AND OTHER VERSES OF SOCIETY.

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*“Most may themselves amuse, perhaps their friends,  
By measured lines that jingle at their ends.”*

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Risum Teneatis, Amici?

*By James M. Cantwell*

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NOT PUBLISHED.

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MADISON, WIS.

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1874.

“FOREVERMORE FOURTEEN!”

To my daughter ANNA.

One day it seems, since first we saw  
Your new-born smiling een  
Our hearts in willing bondage draw,  
But you are now Fourteen.

A few teeth cut, some school-terms past,  
Brief springs and winters keen,  
Vacations fitting, O how fast,  
And you are now Fourteen!

At many a morn and eventide,  
More blest than proudest queen,  
You on my shoulder joyed to ride,  
But you are now Fourteen.

In frolic freedom, archly gay,  
Life's serious hours between,  
How have you loved lamb-like to play,  
But you are now Fourteen!

Your homage to the Mantuan bard,  
A twelvemonth I have seen,  
Nor have you deemed his tasks too hard,  
Though you were not Fourteen!

A nature yours that knows no guile,  
Disdaining all things mean,  
For the whole world a heart-felt smile,  
O, still be just Fourteen!

Stay, Time, thy course! Shield her from care!  
Make me but evergreen,  
And keep my daughter fond and fair,  
Forevermore Fourteen!

*Madison, Wis., July 2d, 1874.*

## THE BLOOD DROPS OF CHRIST.

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Lines pencilled on horseback in a Syrian tour.

When landing first on Sharon's plain,  
 In walks by Jordan's stream,  
 On Jezreel's fields of waving grain,  
 Where Hermon's glaciers gleam.

Above the crest of Olivet,  
 And treading, many an hour,  
 The Holy Land, I oft have met  
 And plucked a blood-red flower.

"Blood-drops of Christ," the peasants call  
 The multitudinous gem,  
 Which reddens thus the meadows all,  
 From Dan to Bethlehem.

The stream that gushed from Jesus' breast,  
 In golden legend sung,  
 Lay not in dust, knew not of rest,  
 But straightway upward sprung.

It rose this flower, which east and west,  
 Neath Palestinian skies,  
 Blooms earliest, latest, brightest, best,  
 And wintry storm defies.

Gray ruin o'er Judea lowers,  
 Jerusalem lies waste,  
 Her purest shrines, her strongest towers,  
 By war and time defaced.

Outlasting Herod's walls of stone,  
 This blossom we behold,  
 More gorgeously than Solomon,  
 Its purple robes unfold.

Its chalice pours in crimson flood,  
 On each ensanguined sod,  
 The cup of sacramental blood  
 Shed by the Lamb of God.

God, broadly on the common track,  
 This floral angel sent,  
 That Palestine might nowhere lack  
 The Savior's monument.

But seeking Balbec and Beyrout,  
 No blood-drop met my sight,  
 As if to grow the emblem shoot  
 Were only Judah's right.

Nor marvel I, the herb of grace  
 Confines its influence sweet,  
 To regions where, in dolorous race,  
 Christ walked with bleeding feet.

Yet, far remote from Palestine,  
 The mystic floweret roams,  
 For myriad pilgrims now combine  
 To shrine it in their homes.

And farther than this ruby flower,  
 Pilgrims beyond the sea,  
 The blood of Christ shall prove its power  
 To make men truly free.

The Moslem crescent pales and dies,  
 Hopeless the wizards weep,  
 But the sole blood that purifies,  
 On wings of fire shall sweep

Through climes from which no pilgrim feet  
 Have sought the sacred shore,  
 When latest flowers their course complete,  
 And earth shall be no more.

When Christ the child to Egypt went,  
 Eluding Herod's wrath,  
 And palms, with fruit and foliage, bent  
 Their boughs along his path.

The Holy babe bade heavenward bear  
 A branchlet from those trees,  
 And straight an angel soared in air  
 To do his Lord's decrees.

That palm-spray, planted in the skies,  
 There grows and bourgeons still,  
 But, when the dead in Christ shall rise  
 To stand on Zion's hill,

From its wide grove it then shall yield  
 The branches to be waved,  
 In homage on the crystal field,  
 By nations of the saved.

Beneath those palms, let us believe,  
 Blood-drops of Christ now bloom,  
 And there angelic care receive,  
 Till saints shall burst the tomb.

One shadows forth his triumph, one  
 His agony and war;  
 The palms are grand, but, to atone,  
 Blood-drops are mightier far.

The palm beneficent that stooped  
 A hungry babe to cherish,  
 In thirsty sands no longer drooped,  
 Sky-planted, ne'er to perish.

Seeds of well-doing has thou sown,  
 To heaven they shall soar,  
 Bear fruits no earthly clime has known,  
 And bear them evermore.

*March 22d, 1868.*

#### ALCESTIS TO ADMETUS.

For thee, O, sweetest spouse, my life I give,  
 That thou through all thy years, and *mine*, mayst live.

#### ON BEATA,

An infant who died before her christening. FROM LESSING.

She who the name of *Blessed* was to bear,  
 More pleased to *be* than to be *called*, lies here.

## BIRTHDAY VERSES.

Lines to Miss ANNA BELLOWS, at a breakfast in Damascus in honor of her Birthday.

Sweet Anna! on your natal day,  
 I proffer you some verses;  
 And trust they may as welcome prove,  
 As gifts from longer purses.

At first, like others, I would pay  
 A backsheesh more substantial,  
 And sauntered through bazaar and booth,  
 With purposes financial.

This cost too much, and that you had,  
 Another was so hateful,  
 That no romance of Araby  
 Could make it to you grateful.

There were some others gay and nice,  
 And cheap enough for parsons,  
 But they'd been seized by Railroad Rice,  
 Or wealthy General Parsons.

One-half a bellows could I buy  
 And join you as yoke-fellows,  
 Twin-like you'd match, and loudly blow,  
 A jolly pair of Bellows!

And so the needed bellows half  
 I sought through vast Damascus,  
 Till traders, wearied, all have cried,  
 "Howadji, cease to ask us!"

A pair of bellows should I give,  
 That were as thankless dole,  
 As apples to Alcinöus,  
 To Newcastle as coal.

And should I Damask roses bring,  
 Which cordial souls bespeak,  
 To take them you'd be scarce inclined,  
 You wear them on each cheek.



Long may they bloom there, then, my love,  
 And pale-faced dames make jealous,  
 When lured by coos of Venus' dove,  
 You've lost the name of Bellows!

*March 26th, 1868.*

#### COLT'S REVOLVER.

Jove's thunderbolt is caught and cast  
 Within Minerva's thimble,  
 Yet when most ponderous and vast,  
 'Twas ne'er so strong and nimble.

But your revolver safe to hold,  
 From Mercury's eye conceal it;  
 Jove's dart is there so light and cold,  
 That arch-thief sure would steal it.

#### LADY B. TO VOLTAIRE.

O, wicked wit beyond compare,  
 O, thou incomparable Voltaire!  
 Must I my heart's desire disclose?  
 Be mine a wit that brightly flows,  
 As if mine eyes each day had seen  
 The sparkles of thy converse keen;  
 And yet be mine such saintly grace,  
 As if I ne'er had seen thy face.

#### THE STATUE OF PETER IN ST. PETER'S.

Baptize a Jove, or cast him in the flame,  
 He'll rise a saint, and Romans kiss his thumb.  
 The self-same bronze and scarcely changed in name,  
 From Jupiter *Jew Peter* has become.

## SILVER WEDDING SALUTATIONS.

To BENJAMIN, the Steady Man, by one very unsteady.

A model husband Ben has been  
 Through five times five revolving years;  
 No thanks to him; he could not sin,  
 Nor plague his wife with jealous fears.

We, Ben, were born where marble blocks  
 Enrich the earth, and sparkle fair,  
 Yet thought them all but common rocks,  
 Nor dreamed of statues hidden there.

But when abroad my lot was cast,  
 And famed Carrara met my eyes,  
 I saw those quarries unsurpassed,  
 We'd deemed so valueless a prize.

So you, "Old Ben," in childish sport,  
 Your Emily had often seen,  
 Yet sought a paragon to court,  
 In climes remote from Rutland Green.

On Hudson's banks the northern maid,  
 Floridian girls at lone Key West,  
 And Western fair, you oft surveyed,  
 By Mississippi's silver breast.

Your eyes were dazed, your heart unmoved,  
 No belle in those Carraras threw  
 So sweet a glance as she you loved  
 In Mountains Green, when love was new.

You ranged the south, the east, the west,  
 You fleshed your sword where foemen meet,  
 Then wooed the queen you'd proved the best,  
 And laid all honors at her feet.

Mirages now no more allure,  
 Mock pearls enough you've proved untrue;  
 Why slight the pearl unique and pure  
 Delusive phantoms to pursue?

Then praise not Ben, though constant still,  
 His nature 'tis, as seas are salt,  
 And though all waters run down hill,  
 He cannot be seduced to fault.

Yet though flirts have no power at all  
 On Benjamin the steady,  
 We must not this his merit call,  
 He's tried them all already.

*Omaha, Neb., September 28th, 1871.*

### CHRISTMAS CAROL.

On finding a pencil hid under a breakfast plate.

From Emily a Christmas gift,  
 Pencil of burnished gold,  
 A sunbeam on my soul to lift  
 When all without is cold.

How sweet to know my life-long friend  
 Feels in my words delight,  
 And loves her gracious aid to lend,  
 That I them all may write!

That fond illusion's quickly past,  
 Too well, alas! I ken,  
 Did Emily wish my words to *last*,  
 She'd give a diamond pen!

*Dec. 25th, 1871.*

### FROM THE LATIN.

Apostle, who with deep amaze did'st mark  
 The petty fane that girdled Judah's ark,  
 What were thy wonder could thine eye survey  
 What Rome to thee here dedicates to-day!

SUS APAGE! HAUD TIBI SPIRO!

Odors I breathe but not for thee!  
 Insensate swine, begone from me!

## TO MRS. E. J. W.

With an Indian Arrow.

To Jeannie fair what shall I send  
 And grace my New Year greetings?  
 All's given her by some richer friend,  
 From silver cup to sweetings.

Yet, lo! a gift unique I bring,  
 A ponderous Pawnee arrow,  
 Not fit young Cupid's bow to string,  
 With Venus and her sparrow.

An Indian brave, armed with this dart,  
 Struck down the buffalo,  
 And pierced the mountain lion's heart,  
 On western hills of snow.

Brutes yield to arrows, arrows are  
 Against the rifle nought;  
 So, ended is the Red Man's war,  
 And his last battle fought.

This blood-stained shaft the dark chiefs yield  
 To pale-faced Saxon strangers,  
 Nor longer need frontiers a shield,  
 From wiles of savage rangers.

This captured bolt on pioneers  
 The light of peace shall lift;  
 Then deem it for your glad New Year's  
 A not unworthy gift.

*Chicago, Jan. 1st, 1872.*

## TUTELAR SAINTS.

"Do you know, my poor Pat, when you enter a bar,  
 That your guardian saint stands and weeps by the door?"  
 Asked a Temperance Priest when crusading afar.

"That," replied the young Paddy, "I knew long before,  
 And I'll tell you the reason that moves him to cry,  
*He's no sixpence a glassful of grog for to buy!"*

## THE HARMONY OF OPPOSITES.

Wherever John and Jane appear,  
 Through all the seasons of the year,  
 In every car, at every ball,  
 Folks tittering to each other call,  
 "No fairer woman treads the ground,  
 Nor can a homelier man be found."

But soon as conversation flows  
 And hidden sense or folly shows,  
 Both talk away their looks. For see!  
 The startled hearers all agree,  
 "No sillier woman treads the ground,  
 Nor can a wiser man be found."

No sharper contrast meets our sight,  
 She fair as day, he foul as night,  
 A simpleton and sage are twined,  
 Yet none this pair mis-matched will find;  
 He knows as much as both should do!  
 And she looks well enough for two!

## CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

Swearer a foreign mission sought.  
 No candidates were deigned a thought  
 Save those who, if not versed in Greek,  
 At least some foreign tongue could speak;  
 But Swearer's game was not thus bluffed.  
 Though nought of learning he had snuffed,  
 Two tongues he claimed that he well knew,  
 English and *profane* language too.  
 His plea prevailed, and he was sent  
 To *Satan's* court plenipotent,  
 Since there alone he'd soon become  
 In all the idioms quite at home.

## OLD IN HAIR, YOUNG IN HEART.

"The *boy* in me will never out!"  
 Says Ben, who threescore years has seen.  
 "Your word," say I, "no man can doubt,  
 At least, if you the 'Old Boy' mean."

## WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

The Rights of Women! Women's Rights!  
 But tell us, sapient Johnny Brights,  
 What less than all things now is theirs,  
 And that unharassed by man's cares?  
 The ancient Paris woman took,  
 Wisdom and power for her forsook.  
 His choice is representative  
 Of the world's course where'er men live.  
 Minerva with all-knowing brain,  
 And Juno with imperial train  
 Before the charms of Venus pale,  
 And nought for swaying men avail.  
 Men treasure seek beyond the seas,  
 That women sitting safe in ease,  
 May wear the silks their fancies prize  
 And diamonds rivaling their eyes.  
 Their own and man's rights thus they hold;  
 Man's all their own, his heart and gold,  
 Only to them his wishes soar,  
 What's left for them to covet more?

## CLEOPATRA.

When Cleopatra frolicking  
 In Antony's beard with fingers twined.  
 A gypsy wildly rollicking,  
 Espied her lover's hidden mind,  
 A cup she brought, dissolved therein  
 Her richest pearl with eager haste,  
 That he a joy unique might win,  
 And wine grow nectar to his taste.

## FRENCH.

Professors who promise straightway to teach  
 Parisian accent as true as they live;  
 No student's credulous ears let them reach,  
*Parishioners* French is all they can give.

## SECRET OF HOMŒOPATHIC PROGRESS.

Homœopathy spreads in the West,  
 Through both country and town it has pressed,  
 Till already Chicago and schools  
 Alike rural and urban it rules.  
 How the new school so swiftly could grow,  
 Ask an old school physician to show.  
 To its truth he just nothing allows,  
 For it has nothing true he avows.  
 "But growth homœopathic"—he pleads,  
 "From *high Tariffs* on *Railroads* proceeds.  
 For heroic prescriptions the weight  
 Of medicinal drugs is so great,  
 That the freight is enormous to pay.  
 But Sir Little Pills, cheapening his way,  
 Pockets medicine-chest as he rides,  
 Or in carpet-bag smugglingly hides."

## VICARIOUS PENANCE.

When Carnival, is drawing to a close,  
 The Roman belle to her confessor goes,  
 And at his feet in penitential tones,  
 Her gay and festive peccadilloes owns.  
 Her penance is a rigorous fast through Lent.  
 To be absolved on such terms she's content.  
 "The fast I'll keep, she says, "from first to last;  
*That is, I'll make my servants for me fast!*"

## A LONG SERMON.

Have you been, boy, to church? Yes, I have, sir, of course.  
*About* what was the sermon of Reverend Strong?  
 I forget, but most said that the learned discourse  
 Seemed to them *about* half of an hour too long.

## A STATUE OF NIOBE.

Let Jove to stone transform me if he please.  
 Though stone I live, thanks to Praxiteles.

## PRECEDENCE—MEDICAL AND LEGAL.

When the Teuton's best Kaiser was asked,  
 "Shall the doctor or lawyer precede?"  
 "Let the doctor by all means go last!"  
 The great emperor straightway decreed.

Then the lawyers, elated with joy,  
 Begged the monarch his reasons to tell  
 For the words which physicians annoy,  
 And which pleased all their rivals so well.

But the autocrat's reason was such  
 As proved bitter for either to swallow.  
 He said, "*Thieves*, by the laws of the Dutch,  
 Must go first, and the *headsmen* must follow!"

## CARDS IN CHURCH.

Joe, Saturday had gambled late,  
 But Sunday came to church in state.  
 That thus a fair show he might make;  
 But lucklessly he lost this stake.  
 Cards with his kerchief came to view  
 From pocket dropped outside his pew,  
 And falling up and down the aisle,  
 Provoked to many a solemn smile.  
 Joe wished himself among the dead,  
 When people stared, and preacher said,  
 In hopes to staunch the wretch's wound,  
 "Thy bible, friend, is badly bound."

## PRAYERS OF THE WICKED.

A ship that bore Plato was storm-tossed one day,  
 On board her was also the worst of the Greeks  
 Who smitten with fearfulness offered to pray.  
 "Be silent," cried Plato, "and hide with the sneaks,  
 Lest Neptune suspect that we've *you* here, beware,  
 Then, nought could persuade him our vessel to spare."



## TO REV. DR. WM. SALTER.

From Summer rest on Eastern shore,  
Amid the loud Atlantic's roar,  
Back to his work of blessing men,  
To-day our Pastor comes again.

He comes, the friend of bye-gone years,  
Whom every memory endears;  
We keep a joyous jubilee,  
And ring him in with bells of glee.

For us the nuptial band he's bound,  
And brought a balm for every wound;  
Baptismal water he has poured,  
And spread the table of our Lord.

Long last his mission here below,  
And then, may he new raptures know,  
Beholding us in realms above,  
And welcomed by our songs of love.

*Burlington, Iowa, Sept., 1872.*

## RESIGNATION.

When frequent knells of fondest hopes are tolled,  
And strokes distressful wring the heart and brow,  
Would we a cheering quenchless light behold,  
Be ours to *bow* while others still *bow-wow*.

## SUN AND MOON.

"All others," says Pat "in the sun may delight,  
But for the fair moon my applause shall be steady;  
She shines in the night when we need beams of light,  
He only by day when there's too much already."

## MODESTY.

"Mock modesty is not in me,"  
Says Tom, "no, not a particle!"  
'Twere well for Tom,—could we but see  
In him the genuine article.

## TO MY WIFE, ON OUR SILVER WEDDING.

The love-light when I first espied  
 Irradiate thy girlish smiles,  
 That very hour tore us apart,  
 To bear thee off unnumbered miles.

No keepsake had I then at hand,  
 To beg thee as love's pledge receive,  
 Only a knife,—but that I gave,  
 Memento of our trysting-eve.

A knife's an emblem all too true  
 Of destinies which cut so trist  
 Our troth-plight rapturous but brief,  
 And still to sever us persist.

A generation now has gone  
 Since love thus sealed our two hearts one,  
 And hope deferred long vexed our souls,  
 Before the wedding's golden sun.

Light purses then made heavy hearts;  
 Strengthening a much-loved sister's hands,  
 Thou voyaged far on Southern seas,  
 And patient toiled in feverous lands.

While I, an awkward, unlicked cub,  
 In market lingered out of favor,  
 Till pilgrimage beyond the sea  
 Had tinged my lore with classic flavor.

But while sea-severed, years on years,  
 Our union was of truer proof  
 Than myriad couples ever know  
 While dwelling always 'neath one roof.

Our wooing-life and wedded life,  
 Have both too much alike been spent;  
 In both harsh fates thrust us apart,  
 Three thousand leagues asunder sent.

Our lives repeat John Gilpin's race,  
 Gilpin and spouse divided ever,  
 Who neared and then struck out again,  
 As planets only meet to sever.

Our separations sooth have been  
 Like fearful death by keen-edged knife,  
 But then our meetings all the more,  
 Wake us new-born to joyous life.

One day when home from Nile I came,  
 Moscow, or lone Pacific Isles,  
 Thrilled us with more of ecstasy  
 Than homelings taste through years of smiles.

From thee and from our babes I've roved,  
 Half round the mighty world and more,  
 In Arctic frost and tropic suns,  
 Have sought to swell our needful store.

The plague, and sea-storm, bandits fierce,  
 Arab, Italian,—Indian, Greek,—  
 The avalanche,—fire,—vigil,—flood,—  
 Have chased the smoothness from my cheek.

And thou, meantime, hast traveled too  
 Within the walls of household care ;  
 Our Paradise well hast thou kept,  
 Training the darlings treasured there.

Yes, thou hast traveled too with me,  
 As Beatrice by Dante's side,  
 Through labyrinths of sorrow went,  
 His angel-guardian, and guide.

Visions of thee have cheered me on  
 Through wildernesses faint and weary,  
 When tempted at a thousand turns,  
 Homeless where all the world was dreary.

Thou'st given me clues that led me safe  
 In dolorous depths of purgatory,  
 And nerved my soul the steep to climb,  
*Excelsior* to gates of glory.



Though courtship's gallantries depart  
And youthful buoyancy be past,  
Those fleeting flowers why do we mourn,  
Feasting on fruits that always last ?

They've vanished, but as Faith shall cease  
Transfigured in eternal light,  
And as the stars of Hope must pale  
In radiance of celestial sight.

Some tell us that in scores of years  
No words of crossness pass between them ;  
But speaking thus, they vainly think,  
Envy to move in us who've seen them.

A namby-pamby style of life  
At best is all their lukewarm boast ;  
As if Dead Seas were better boons,  
Than ocean if in surges tossed.

In heat of day, and heat of heart,  
Sometimes to quarrel we have tried ;  
But evening sun has ne'er gone down  
Before our lamb-like wrath had died.

If not yet mine, I'd woo thee now,  
Thine ark I'd seek like Noah's dove,  
And fettered love twixt thee and me,  
Transcendent FREE-LOVE still should prove.

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